

# **Can Education Reform in Iraq Build a Better Peace?**

**A Monograph  
by  
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## **Abstract**

Can Education Reform Build a Better Peace in Iraq? by Maj Daniel E. Rauch, USAF, 60 pages.

Iraq may well be on a course to becoming the next Iran – an Islamic republic that tramples on individual liberties in the name of religion. Arguably, the propensity of the predominately Shia country is to develop a government more concerned with adherence to the Quran than to the preservation of civil liberties. Altering Iraq's current path is a long-term effort and one particularly important point of influence for the US is Iraq's education system; although not a singular solution, the curriculum of the education system will heavily influence the thought process of future generations of Iraqi leaders. Without continued US engagement, Iraq may turn out to be a problem instead of the middle-eastern ally we seek.

Iraq is a country recently liberated from over three decades of socialism and brutal oppression. This monograph highlights some of the methods Saddam Hussein went to control his populace and the effects his leadership created. The population of Iraq was ill-prepared for the sudden liberation they received in 2003 and for the reconstitution of their nation. Contained herein are comparisons to post WWII Japan and the reunification of Germany in 1990. There is no template for success in Iraq.

This paper focuses on the need to use the Iraqi education system to create a citizenry who will not only tolerate, but embrace liberal democratic reform in future generations. Included are the roadblocks created by Arab and Islamic culture; the history of Arab culture and Islamic civilization are presented to highlight the significant differences between Western and Arab-Islamic cultures which impede the path toward an Iraq that meets current US goals. The current Iraqi Constitution is a product of their culture and is not inductive to creating the Middle Eastern ally the US seeks. Long-term engagement within the Iraqi schools is necessary to provide the liberalization of thought necessary for a liberated Iraq.

Finally, this monograph espouses the need to educate our soldiers not only on Iraqi culture, but on the historical underpinnings of the United States success as a liberal democratic republic. We must understand the oppositional forces at work as well as have a commanding understanding of who we are and what we really want. This monograph offers that the US must create an effective strategic narrative that does not threaten the culture Iraqis hold dear; although the content of that narrative is beyond the scope of this research, highlighted are issues that show the need and point to areas of further study. In order to prevent Iraq from continuing on a path inconsistent with US desires, we must develop tools to engage now so to initiate the long-term effort of transition.

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## Introduction

AMONG the numerous advantages promised by a well-constructed Union, none deserves to be more accurately developed than its tendency to break and control the violence of faction... The latent causes of faction are thus sown in the nature of man...the CAUSES of faction cannot be removed, and that relief is only to be sought in the means of controlling its EFFECTS... it clearly appears, that the same advantage which a republic has over a democracy, in controlling the effects of faction, is enjoyed by a large over a small republic...therefore, we behold a republican remedy for the diseases most incident to republican government.

PUBLIUS<sup>1</sup>

Since the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the United States is struggling to rebuild Iraq into a self-governed and democratic ally. No single aspect of the rebuilding process will affect the long-term stability and allegiance more than education reform. The United States government, and the multi-national forces involved, must fully understand the effect education has on producing citizens capable of building a stable and liberal democratic Iraq that will meet US long-term goals. Without a realistic long-term strategy focused on educating the populace, Iraq will not become the ally the United States needs in the region.

The future of a country is its children and Iraq will soon enough be in the hands of today's Iraqi children; the education that shapes and prepares them to participate in their new

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<sup>1</sup> Federalist No. 10, written by James Madison (published under the name "PUBLIUS"), was an essay to the people of the State of New York in order to garner support for ratification of the newly written constitution. Madison's thesis is that the Articles of the Confederation needed to be replaced by the republican form of government established by the new constitution in order to mitigate the potential for a majority faction to trample on the rights of the minority and act counter to the common good. How long will it take until the people in Iraq, liberated not by their own blood but by the toil of a US led coalition, possess the intellectual maturity to grasp the principles of secular government that the US hopes to establish there? Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers* (New York: Bantam, 1982), 483.

country will shape the nation. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is directly involved, through the use of provincial reconstruction teams, with rebuilding and shaping Iraq's education system. United States interest in Iraq and the region is long-term and the impact of the current transition team's efforts will influence whether or not that interest is met. Initial research is inconclusive at best as to whether consistent and appropriate results are being achieved in educating the youth of Iraq. Early efforts of de-baathification and censorship of school materials may have had lasting negative impacts. The analysis of the effort and achievements of the United States led coalition contained in this monograph may serve to answer whether or not Iraq's children will soon be prepared to lead Iraq to be a close US ally.

The US needs to focus not just on infrastructure rehabilitation, but also on reforming the curriculum of the Iraqi education system in order to meet long-term US policy goals in Iraq. Iraq should be provided with culturally acceptable education guidance focused on providing its citizenry the skill sets necessary to succeed in the global economy. Transition teams and advisors must ensure the curriculum guides the population toward moderate and tolerant views of the rest of the world to aid in the long-term reconciliation and reintegration process. Short-term focus must include providing vocation skills to adults and young adults and provide children with the base of knowledge necessary to continue toward higher education.

Sources of information for this study are scarce as little is published in English on the Iraqi education system and current reform efforts. Correspondence with current and past members of reconstruction teams and other organizations involved in the reconstitution efforts are used as primary sources. Congressional, USAID, military, and other government documents, studies, and reports are used to validate the short and long term goals for Iraq and the provincial reconstruction teams. Historic and comparative cases are also referenced for relevant comparative analysis. A qualitative assessment must be made based upon the limited, yet diverse, information available.

Unfortunately, there exists no standard template for rebuilding a country. While similarities exist between post-invasion Iraq and post World War II Japan and Germany (post the fall of the Berlin wall), those historic events are contextually different and do not provide a checklist-like plan to follow. However, the historical study of those countries is still relevant. The rebuilding of Japan and the reunification of Germany produced two successful countries that are allied, in general, to the interests of the United States. The study contained herein will include the nature and emphasis on education reform in Germany and Japan in order to show the part it played in their success.

Comparative analysis and historical studies of Middle Eastern countries education system reforms are also included in this monograph. Turkey is as an example of a moderate Middle East state having cultural contexts more closely aligned to Iraq than Japan or Germany. A study of Turkey shows the effect the education system has on development and prosperity as well as the cultural obstacles to reform in the region.

An analysis of the Arab and Islamic culture in Iraq is accomplished to highlight the specific obstacles in the way of moderate education reform. This is done in order to highlight the need to take our western lens off and view the task in the appropriate context. Framing the problem in the correct cultural perspective allows us to reduce the complexity and approach the obstacles in a less confrontational way.

Finally, this monograph intends to show that after years of oppressive socialist control and little to no access to liberal education, Iraqi citizens are ill prepared to form a liberal democracy. It may take generations before its citizens, in mass, possess the education to support a liberal democratic republic such as we have in the US and desire in Iraq. Engagement with Iraq will have to continue for generations before reaching US goals.



## Goals for Iraq

Education should be looked upon as the pursuit of truth, as a preparation for life in a democratic nation, and as a training for the social and political responsibilities which freedom entails... Measures should be taken as rapidly as possible to achieve equality of education opportunity for all.

—*US Department of State Revision of the Japanese Educational System, Directive, Serial No. 74*

Six years after the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the United States is entering its second presidential administration. President Bush's policies toward Iraq, and the progress of the war, are increasingly drawing domestic and international criticism. As president Obama succeeds President Bush, the strategy in Iraq will change.

President Bush's stated goals for Iraq are to create "a unified democratic federal Iraq that can govern itself, defend itself, and sustain itself, and is an ally in the War on Terror."<sup>2</sup> That statement not only implies education reform, it requires it. After decades of authoritarian Baath party rule, Iraq's ability to educate its citizenry to govern and sustain itself was non-existent in the wake of the 2003 invasion and Saddam Hussein's fall from power. To meet the President's objectives, the Iraqi population must be reconstituted, and this will take decades.

President Obama's statements and guidance to date is primarily focused on ending the war in Iraq. No new guidance is yet released that alters the need for education reform.

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<sup>2</sup> National Security Council, *Highlights of the Iraq Strategy Review* (National Security Council, 2007), 8, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/iraq/2007/iraq-strategy011007.pdf> (accessed September 13, 2008).

Current National Security Council objectives for Iraq include quelling sectarian violence, expanding the economy, fostering reconciliation, and ensuring Iraq does not become a breeding ground for terrorists.<sup>3</sup> These objectives require not only a change in the infrastructure of Iraq, but also a change in the way people think, and although these objectives are listed as being for our current phase of operations, they are not short-term goals. In order for Iraq to succeed, the conditions listed in these objectives must be sustainable and sustaining these conditions will require an entire generation of educated minds capable of embracing modernity, moderation and tolerance. The United States, through the use of provincial reconstruction teams, should attempt to set the conditions necessary to enable Iraq to set the conditions required to produce minds capable of meeting the National Security Council Objectives.

Provincial reconstruction teams, unfortunately, do not have very detailed stated goals. Their efforts are focused around general national interests for Iraq of: creating a stable central government, preventing the spread of extremist ideology, and countering insurgents and terrorists.<sup>4</sup> Under these guidelines, provincial reconstruction teams accomplish activities including governance training, reconstruction and development projects, and promoting business development.<sup>5</sup> Arguably, the critical factor in meeting US national interests in Iraq in the long-term is education of its citizens. Any economic reform requires education. And we must

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<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, 8

<sup>4</sup> N. Abbaszadeh, M. Crow, M. El-Khoury, J. Gandomi, D. Kuwayama, C. MacPherson, M. Nutting, N. Parker, T. Weiss, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams: Lessons and Recommendations* (Princeton University: Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, 2008), 50, [http://www.princeton.edu/research/pwreports\\_f07/www591b.pdf](http://www.princeton.edu/research/pwreports_f07/www591b.pdf) (accessed 09/18/2008).

<sup>5</sup> National Security Council, *Highlights of the Iraq Strategy Review*, 8

recognize that reconciliation between Sunni and Shia, moderate and extremist, Arab and non-Arab, and westerner and Muslim will take generations and the crucial node to act upon is the schools. Iraq will not become a moderate self-governing moderate country overnight; years of neglect of its citizens have resulted in conditions not conducive to this. The transition and reconstruction teams must set the conditions to place Iraq on the long-term road of stability.

## **Iraq Then and Now**

Whether the books one reads in school encourage loyalty to a civilization, a people, an idea, a country, or a God—or to some combination of the above—makes a difference in how social, political, and cultural boundaries are drawn, perceived, and performed.

—Gregory Starrett and Eleanor Abdella Doumato, *Teaching Islam*

### **Iraq's Education System**

Saddam Hussein used the school system to indoctrinate children and promote loyalty to his regime. Decades of Baath party rule left the education system inculcated with the party line; it will take years to overcome. Generations of children were trained in Saddam's schools with little to no outside influence. Dictatorial leadership grows submissive followers, not future leaders. Since 2003, progress has been made to rebuild and restructure the education system, but only time can tell if it will be sufficient. If the culture in Iraq was even partially influenced by Saddam's school system, there are generations of work to accomplish.

Saddam's textbooks were full of anti-western and pro-regime rhetoric. A sixth grade textbook stated "the modern era has witnessed the covetousness of the imperialist states, at the head of them the American, NATO and Zionist forces." The level of indoctrination was tantamount to brainwashing; children were required to recite pledges to "Pappa Saddam," use his picture as a screensaver, memorize his speeches, and learn the heroic deeds of the Baath party. "They learned their multiplication tables by computing the casualty count of shooting down four American planes with three crew members each" and learned geography with the exclusion of

Israel from the map. Students wrote essays on the shortcomings of other Arab states and were tested on their knowledge of Saddam. The curriculum was one of rote memorization, not a true learning environment.<sup>6</sup>

After almost 35 years of Baath party rule, most of the teachers knew no other system than Saddam's. Teachers were required to include Regime policies in every lesson or face repercussions. Many teachers were products of the education system they taught in, and after the 2003 invasion and the toppling of Saddam, some found it hard to break with the old regime requirements and begin reformation. The gutting of the pro-Saddam school system by US (and local) authorities is a start toward reconstruction of the education system, but it is yet to be determined if it is enough.<sup>7</sup>

In October 2003, the US appointed Governing Council immediately started removing pro-Baath Party material from the schools. Images and lines of text were blacked out. The

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<sup>6</sup> Tina Wang's article in the Harvard International Review discusses how the Baath regime used the education system to indoctrinate the population; Tina Wang, "Rewriting the Textbooks: Education Policy in Post-Hussein Iraq," *Harvard International Review*, January, 2005, , [http://www.entrepreneur.com/tradejournals/article/129463338\\_1.html](http://www.entrepreneur.com/tradejournals/article/129463338_1.html) (accessed October 2, 2008).. John Tierney's articles brings up similar points. John Tierney, "THE STRUGGLE FOR IRAQ: EDUCATION; Iraqi Schools Expelling 'Beloved Saddam'," *The New York Times*, October 1, 2003, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9F07E0D91F3DF932A35753C1A9659C8B63&scp=1&sq=2003%20saddam%20textbooks&st=cse> (accessed October 2, 2008).; John Tierney, "Word for Word/Hussein-Era Textbooks; See Jane Run from the Zionist Intruders," *The New York Times*, October 5, 2003, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9906EFDD153CF936A35753C1A9659C8B63&scp=2&sq=2003%20saddam%20textbooks&st=cse> (accessed October 2, 2008).; Marc Lacey's article cites teachers and students who describe the indoctrination in the schools. Marc Lacey, "AFTER THE WAR: EDUCATION; the Schools in Basra Expel 'Papa Saddam'," *The New York Times*, May 28, 2003, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=980DE0DD1131F93BA15756C0A9659C8B63&scp=4&sq=2003%20saddam%20textbooks&st=cse> (accessed October 2, 2008).

<sup>7</sup> Tierney, *THE STRUGGLE FOR IRAQ: EDUCATION; Iraqi Schools Expelling 'Beloved Saddam'*; Wang, *Rewriting the Textbooks: Education Policy in Post-Hussein Iraq*

curriculum is being reconstituted and more teachers are being rehired and trained. The Iraqi Cultural Office recently published a white paper on the strategy for higher education. Iraqis are taking charge of the education system and are attempting to institute reform. But significant damage needs to be reversed.<sup>8</sup>

Iraq's three decades of authoritarian government have resulted in the lowest literacy rate in the region. Iraq's adult literacy rate is 74.1% compared to 93.3% for Kuwait, 87.4% in Turkey, 77% in Iran.<sup>9</sup> The concern is even with new curriculum this will not be sufficient to truly change the culture to one that fosters a democratic Iraq allied to the US; the potential exists that the Muslim Arab culture is at odds with western ideals. Not only is there a need to repair the damage done by Saddam, but the principles of Arab Islam culture also need to be addressed in order to determine the way forward.

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<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*; The Iraqi Cultural Office states that, at least at the higher education level, the curriculum is being changed to require studies in human rights and democracy. These compulsory lessons are designed to allow students to "learn the basic knowledge essential at once for their emancipation from all forms of oppression and suppression". This authors concern is that higher education may be too late in life to teach this subject matter and the cultural biases ingrained through early childhood will not be overcome. *Strategies of the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research* (Iraqi Cultural Office - USA: Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2009), [http://www.iraqiculture-usa.org/he\\_strategies.doc](http://www.iraqiculture-usa.org/he_strategies.doc) (accessed March 3, 2009). John Agresto, in *Mugged by Reality*, points out that students still have little choice as to their field of study, and the smartest students will most likely enter the scientific fields, leaving the humanities courses to the lesser capable students. John Agresto, *Mugged by Reality : The Liberation of Iraq and the Failure of Good Intentions*, 1st ed. (New York: Encounter Books, 2007), 122, <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0619/2006026428.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook," <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sa.html> (accessed October 2, 2008).

## Islam and Arab Culture in Iraq

Article 2 of the Iraqi constitution states Islam is the law of the land and no law shall be made contradicting Islam's established provisions. Article 89 dictates that the Federal Supreme Court (similar in authority to ours) is to have not only judges, but also experts in Islamic jurisprudence. As an Islamic Arab country recently liberated from thirty-five years of repressive socialist rule, Iraq is unlikely to achieve the secular, pluralistic, liberal democratic republic form of government the United States has.<sup>10</sup> Arguably, the propensity of Islamic civilization and Arab culture are at odds with such a goal. This is not to say the U.S. is incapable of achieving its goals; the goals just need to be put into an appropriate cultural perspective.

What is possibly even more intriguing about the use of a guiding religion in a constitution is the underlying reason behind the constitution and the ramifications of that decision. The constitution of the United States (and most other western nations) establishes conditions to protect personal liberties and define people's rights. Defining Islam as the law of the land leads one to believe that the ultimate goal is not so much protecting civil liberties as it is to save the human soul for eternity; a very foreign thought (no pun intended) for most western thinkers. Making Islam the law of the land and allowing no law that can go against the principles of Islam means that the government is not truly "by the people." The Iraqi constitution will unlikely

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<sup>10</sup> *Iraqi Constitution* (United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, 2005), [http://www.uniraq.org/documents/iraqi\\_constitution.pdf](http://www.uniraq.org/documents/iraqi_constitution.pdf) (accessed November 20, 2008).; The Library of Congress lists Iraq as being 75-80% Arab and at least 95% Islamic. "Iraq," Library of Congress Country Studies, [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+iq0037\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+iq0037)) (accessed December 12, 2008).

produce the type of liberal democratic republic most U.S. citizens understand. The formative beliefs that went into writing the U.S. constitution and the Iraqi constitution are the product of two very different cultures.<sup>11</sup>

In the near term (10-20 years), Iraq has the potential to become a stable functioning nation in the global society. But Iraq will probably not look like a Western country, nor should we try to make it look that way. Iraq will progress within its propensity as a predominately Islamic Arab nation. To achieve US goals, it is essential we understand the history and context of Iraq and the Arab Islamic world. The job of the U.S. should be to provide the tools, resources, and appropriate motivation to ensure Iraq becomes a moderate and open society that will, in the long term, achieve the governmental transparency common in Western Europe and the United States.

### Iraqi Sub-Culture

While the underlying Arab and Muslim cultures heavily influence Iraq's sub-culture, the influence of thirty-five years of oppression by Saddam's Baath party is worth note. John Agresto, in *Mugged by Reality*, asserts that the induced dependency brought on by socialism has destroyed the Iraqi people's initiative, independence, and sense of nationalism. Saddam's focus on science and engineering, at the expense of liberal arts education, has inhibited the ideals of human rights,

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<sup>11</sup> John Agresto was senior advisor to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Iraq under Ambassador Paul Bremer during the period 2003-2004. His book offers lessons learned from his time in Iraq and offers a unique perspective on culture (both Iraq and American). His thoughts on liberal democracy heavily influence this section. Agresto, *Mugged by Reality : The Liberation of Iraq and the Failure of Good Intentions*, 17-18



critical thinking, and pluralistic government. Iraq is unique in the Arab Islamic world and while simply understanding its cultural influences is unlikely to produce a solution, to dismiss its history would be a gross error.<sup>12</sup>

Saddam did not rule out of any sense of idealism or religion. His rule cannot be likened to that of Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, or Mao; Saddam ruled for power. Saddam and his sons were sadistic and tyrannical. Very few Iraqis today could possibly remember life before Saddam, and those that were independent thinkers (potential revolutionary leaders), are probably dead. Iraqis lived in fear of Saddam's regime, and prior to the 2003 invasion there was no sign of an internal revolution.<sup>13</sup>

The Iraqi people were not ready for revolution in 2003. They did not lead their liberation (or even take part); they sat on the sidelines and waited for the result. Iraq is filled with corruption and self-service, and his little, if any, sense of civic responsibility. Thirty-five years of living in fear of death, in a time when life has little fulfillment, can easily lead to looking inward (selfishness) or for a greater meaning (religion – namely Islam).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> John Agresto's commentaries from his book are the influence for this section. His accounts of interactions with Iraqis he knew and worked are how these conclusions are drawn. The Kurds, and other sub-cultures in Iraq, are not included in this monograph. *ibid.*, xvii-194

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*

## Islamic Culture

From Khalid ibn al-Walid to the Persian authorities...After you receive my letter send me guarantees and you will have peace; otherwise, in the name of Allah, I shall send you men who like death as much as you like life.

— Khalid ibn al-Walid, *War and peace in the law of Islam*<sup>15</sup>

Islam is a civilization governed by the laws of God as stated in the Quran. The goals of early Islam (to spread the law of Allah to all people) are in direct confrontation with the non-Islamic world. This ideology (bent on radical change) has not undergone reformation like Christianity, and many Muslims (often termed fundamentalists) are still pursuing the goals of Islamic expansion and ideological world domination. Orthodox Islamic law is incompatible with free society as seen by western (and any other) culture. Islam transformed the Arab people into a powerful Muslim civilization with the goal of establishing Islamic dominance over the entire world.<sup>16</sup>

Islam and Arab culture are not one in the same although they are very closely linked. The Arab world is at the core of Islamic civilization but Islam dominates the Arab-Muslim life. Most

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<sup>15</sup> Khalid ibn al-Walid was the general commanding Muhammad's forces. He remained in service, after Muhammad's death, to caliph Abu Bakr; this quote is from a letter to the Persians demanding they accept the rule of Islam, or suffer *jihad*. Issuing this invitation to Islam is required under law before *jihad* may be declared. Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1955), 94-97.

<sup>16</sup> Majid Khadduri, an Iraqi born scholar and a member of the Iraqi Ministry in the 1940s and delegation to the United Nations, writing in his 1955 book, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, provides a history of the evolution of Islam and how the religion and Islamic law are related. *ibid*.

Arabs are Muslim, but most Muslims are not Arabs.<sup>17</sup> Iran, for instance, is predominately Muslim, but her people are Persian. Islam started in the Arab world (specifically the area that is now Saudi Arabia) and currently has over one billion followers world-wide. In order to engage Iraqis and help rebuild their society, knowledge of both Islam and Arabic culture is required.

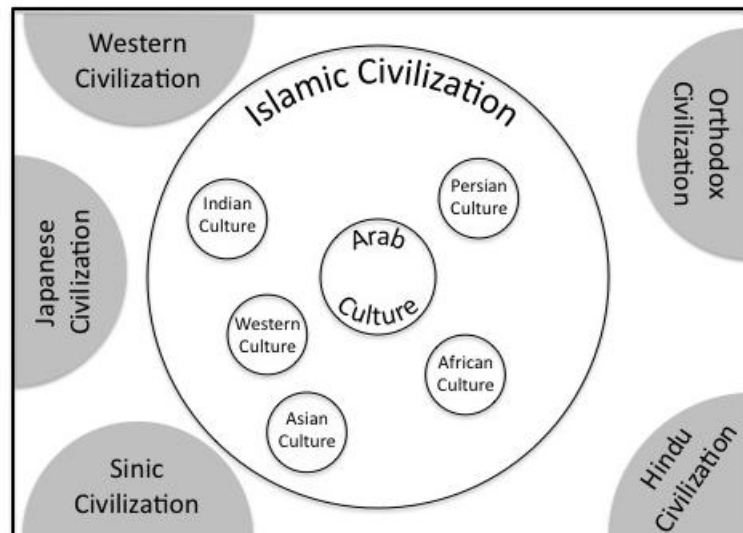


Figure 1, Arab Culture and Islamic Civilization<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Although there is not a definitive source for the exact percentages of Arab-Muslims and non Arab-Muslims, according to the CIA World Factbook, approximately 21% of the world's population (2007 estimate) is Muslim but only 3% of the world's population speaks Arabic. Subscribing to Raphael Patai's that being an Arab is defined predominately by speaking Arabic, the estimate for non-Arab Muslims is approximately 18% of the Muslim world. According to the CIA World Factbook, the majority of the populations of all 22 members of the Arab League (which includes all the major Arab countries) are Muslim; most of the Arab League nations were reported to be over 90% Muslim. "The World Factbook," CIA - The World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/xx.html> (accessed December 12, 2008).; Raphael Patai, *The Arab Mind*, Rev. ed. (New York: Hatherleigh Press, 2002), 12.

<sup>18</sup> The thoughts captured in this figure are representative of the ideas of both Samuel Huntington and Raphael Patai. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 367.; Patai, *The Arab Mind*, 466

Samuel Huntington, in *The Clash of Civilizations*, asserts that Islam is not just a just different culture, but also a well recognized separate civilization. His assertion is intriguing in that he refers to the civilization as Islamic, not Arab. Raphael Patai, in *The Arab Mind*, strengthens this argument by offering that the core of life for most Arabs is Islam; he presents the case that (in the Arab world) Islam performs a normative function and that Westernization threatens to break, or weaken, that connection between religion and everyday life. Figure 1, Arab Culture and Islamic Civilization, may help explain the relationship between the cultures and civilizations presented here. This is the primary reason the West is ostracized in the Middle East. We are seen as crusaders – an existential threat to their civilization. This is overtly stated in the published 1998 statement made by the World Islamic Front, with a notable signatory being Osama Bin Laden. Confrontation with the Islamic civilization has roots back to the beginning of Islam; it is not a recent occurrence.<sup>19</sup>

Fundamentally, Islam is at odds with western culture. Daniel Benjamin traces al Qaeda to the teachings of Muhamad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, who was greatly influenced by Taqi ad-Din Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah (a 13th century Islamic scholar). Ibn Taymiyyah professed a strict adherence to the Quran, and the belief that Islam and government are inseparable. The works of ibn Taymiyyah influenced Sayyid Qutb, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950's and

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<sup>19</sup> Samuel Huntington lists five modern civilizations in the world and the potential for conflict between them. An Iraqi-born author, Majid Khadduri, who in 1955 made a very similar assertion as to the existence of the five modern civilizations, preceded Huntington's view. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*; Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, 42; Patai contributes the thoughts on the Arab Mind. Patai, *The Arab Mind*, 152-156; Lewis analyzes the Osama bin Laden's messages and his (bin Laden's) hatred of the west. Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam : Holy War and Unholy Terror*, Modern Library ed., 2003), xxiv-xxvi.

60's, and one of the men credited with significantly furthering today's fundamental Islamic movement. Qutb developed a loathing for the godlessness of the United States, saw Westerners as crusaders, and found no room for compromise with the two civilizations. Qutb's thoughts and writings resonate within the Islamic community; the Egyptian Islamic Jihad (al-Jihad), formed in the late 1970's, based their doctrine and manifesto upon the fundamentalist writings of Qutb. Al-Jihad is credited with the assassination of Egyptian President Sadat and, under the leadership of Dr. Ayman Muhammad Rabaie al-Zawahiri, merged with Al Qaeda. The point here is that most violent Islamic groups are not merely radical or extreme; they are fundamentalist organizations within Islamic civilization.<sup>20</sup>

In order to understand the Islamic culture, comprehension of the terms "fundamentalism", "radicalism", and "extremism" are required.<sup>21</sup> These three terms are often

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<sup>20</sup> Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab is the eighteenth century theologian credited with being the founder of the modern form of Sunni Islam, originating in Saudi Arabia, and the brand of Islam, which Osama Bin Laden subscribes. Wahhabism is a form of Hanbali Sunni Islam, and is often referred to as Salafi because of the strict adherence to the teachings of the first three generations of Muslims. Ibn Taymiyyah is cited as the basis for modern day jihad movements. Global Security, "Salafi Islam," GlobalSecurity.org, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/intro/islam-salafi.htm> (accessed December 10, 2008).; Daniel Benjamin, *The Age of Sacred Terror* (New York: Random House, 2003), 560, <http://cgsc.leavenworth.army.mil/carl/images/ebinary.jpg>.; Encyclopedia Britannica, "Muhammad-Ibn-Abd-Al-Wahhab," Encyclopedia Britannica Online, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/634033/Muhammad-ibn-Abd-al-Wahhab> (accessed December 9, 2008).; Benjamin discusses the reasons modern Islamic movements formed. Benjamin, *The Age of Sacred Terror*, 62-66,78; Several authors contribute to the history and development of al Qaeda. James Martin Center, "Al-Qaida," James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey, CA, <http://cns.miiis.edu/research/wtc01/alqaida.htm> (accessed December 9, 2008).; Sammy Bergoch Salama Joe-Ryan., "Al-Jihad Al-Islami," James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey, CA, <http://cns.miiis.edu/research/wtc01/aljihad.htm> (accessed December 9, 2008).

<sup>21</sup> The author does not claim to have sole authority on defining these terms, nor are the definitions provided unarguable or widely accepted. Multiple sources are used to develop these definitions in order to classify and make less complex the understanding of various Islamic groups.

used interchangeably when referencing violent Muslim groups. While this is sufficient for conversational purposes, a more accurate understanding is necessary in order to interact with an Islamic society. While these terms are not limited in context to just Islamic groups, understanding the terms may help identify Islamic movements.

Fundamentalism is typically used when describing a strict adherence to doctrine, most notably religious doctrine; the word connotes conservatism. Islam has a history of strict interpretation, so in this sense fundamentalism because synonymous with orthodox. Being a religious fundamentalist does not make one evil; however, it may limit the ability for discourse. Fundamentalism is unlikely to be accommodating given the reliance on core concepts and beliefs. Depending upon the type of fundamentalism, “unlikely” may become “impossible”. With respect to religion, these concepts may be divine and not subject to the will or interpretation of man. Religious fundamentalism is almost assuredly to be at odds with government if the principals of the state are not built upon the same fundamental concepts.<sup>22</sup>

Islamic fundamentalism is prevalent throughout the world (e.g. Iran, Pakistan, and Sudan). Iran’s 1979 revolution, led by Ayatollah Rohulla Khomeini, is an excellent example of a

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<sup>22</sup> Merriam-Webster defines fundamentalism as “a movement or attitude stressing strict adherence to a set of basic principles” and orthodox as “conforming to established doctrine, especially in religion.” Merriam-Webster Online, “Merriam-Webster Dictionary,” Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, <http://www.merriam-webster.com> (accessed January 22, 2009).; Majid Khadduri describes the history of Islamic law and the notion of strict adherence. Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, 3-41; Kressel investigates the reasons behind religious extremism. Neil Jeffrey Kressel, *Bad Faith: The Danger of Religious Extremism* (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2007), <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0713/2007011479.html>.; Marty provides comparative studies in fundamentalism. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, *The Fundamentalism Project*, Vol. 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 4-7.

fundamentalist movement that is now a nation-state. Khomeini was adamant that the new Islamic Republic be ruled by Islamic clerics and warned against letting the faithless influence the formation of the governmental structure. And although some fundamentalists believe Iran is a failure and un-Islamic because it supplants the grander nation of Islam through the defining of borders and national identity, Iran is arguably a stable country.<sup>23</sup> Iran is a worthwhile mention here because, being predominately Shia like Iraq, it has its own form of fundamentalism. Islamic fundamentalism is not homogenous, and different sects (particularly Shia vs Sunni) will hold to distinctly different core beliefs. Unwavering faith in the core tenets of religion is not necessarily the problem; the problem is how those fundamental views are expressed.

The difference between fundamentalism and extremism may be subtle, and as Neil Kressel states in *Bad Faith*: “one must avoid confusing the religious extremist with someone who is just extremely religious.” Extremism connotes fanaticism and the distortion of fundamental beliefs to justify violent action. But to be careful, we must discriminate between religiously based actions that are extreme and those that are just dysfunctional. Self-mutilation and tolerated oppression (most likely through ignorance) are signs of a dysfunctional religion. By this definition, the fundamental version of Sunni Islam that subjugates women and religious minorities in Saudi Arabia is classified as dysfunctional. Hezbollah, on the other hand, is an example of a Shia group that subscribes to extremist interpretations of Islam to justify and glorify

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<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, 88-123

suicide attacks. When religion is used to actively and forcibly impede life, liberty, or the pursuit of happiness, it should be defined as extreme.<sup>24</sup>

While extreme actions define “extremists”, extreme views define radicals. Merriam-Webster defines the term radical as “tending or disposed to make extreme changes in existing views, habits, conditions, or institutions.” The term is typically used with reference to politically motivated groups. Unlike fundamentalism and extremism, which may be defined in absolute terms, radicalism is defined in relation to the norms of a society or culture. The Radical Republicans in the United States Congress in the 1860s advocated for an immediate end to slavery and clashed with President Lincoln who opted for a slower, more moderate, form of emancipation. The Nation of Islam, currently run by Louis Farrakhan, would be an example of a modern-day radical Islamic group in the United States. A person advocating representative democracy would be considered radical in China but not so in the United States. A person advocating *Sharia* law in the United States would be considered radical, but not so in Afghanistan prior to the American led invasion in 2001. While the Radical Republicans can be considered “radical”, the Nation of Islam can arguably be called “radical fundamentalists”. Hezbollah can also be defined as radical because they desire drastic political reform in Lebanon (they would of course be extremist radicals). Radical Islam need not be dangerous, provided the reform advocated is sought through peaceful and lawful methods.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> In his book, Kressel (a psychology professor) discusses at length the causes of twenty-first century militant Islam. Kressel, *Bad Faith : The Danger of Religious Extremism*, 33-54

<sup>25</sup> While the Merriam-Webster is useful, it is sometimes insufficient for defining terms in the proper context. Merriam-Webster Online, *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*; John Simkin, in his article



Fundamentalists and radicals are part of politics, whereas extremists are violent, dangerous, and will typically have radical views based upon fundamental beliefs. Understanding the history and motivations of groups in Iraq is essential in order to deal with them in ways that will prevent them from taking extreme measures. Also, understanding the cultural background will help identify groups that are most prone to extremism. Labeling a group as “radical” and “fundamental” should be cause for alarm only in that they need to be studied and monitored for indicators of extremism.

By connotation, Islamic fundamentalists oppose liberalization and modernization; those things are an existential threat. Some Islamic fundamentalists believe in strict adherence to *Sharia* (a system of Islamic law based upon the Quran and Hadith). *Sharia* law is not compatible with Western culture, and a country governed by a fundamental group (e.g. the Taliban in

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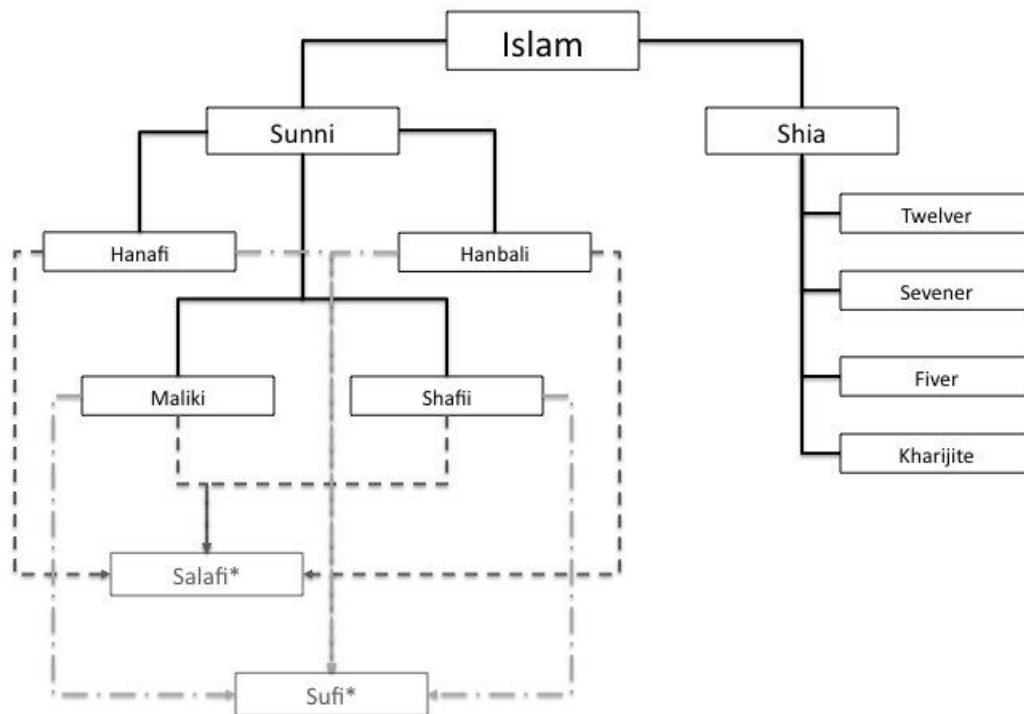
published by Spartacus Educational, provides a historic view point of what it means to be a political radical John Simkin, "Radical Republicans," Spartacus Educational, <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USASradical.htm> (accessed January 22, 2009).; The Nation of Islam advocates that the United States be run on the principles of Islam and according to Allah's will. This would be radical change. Louis Farrakhan, "The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan's December 1, 2001 Letter to President George W. Bush," Nation of Islam, [http://www.noi.org/statements/transcript\\_011201.htm](http://www.noi.org/statements/transcript_011201.htm) (accessed January 22, 2009).; The Radical Republicans were advocating immediate reform, which would have drastic impact on the economy of the southern states and the potential to alienate the border states that also relied heavily on slavery. These people, however, were not religiously motivated. The Nation of Islam advocates reform that would require drastic constitution change and base their motivations on the tenants of Islam. Using the term “fundamental” with respect to the Nation of Islam is arguable because some would say that theirs is a false religion as it claims a prophet after Mohammad. However, since their beliefs are fundamental to their version of Islam, this author believes it is justified. Simkin, *Radical Republicans*; Farrakhan, *The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan's December 1, 2001 Letter to President George W. Bush*; Hezbollah was born out of the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon (although it is reasonably arguable that the group would have come into existence without the invasion. Hezbollah was inspired by the Iranian revolution and desired similar radical changes in Lebanon. Augustus R. Norton, *Hezbollah : A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 29-46, <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0704/2006100594-d.html>; <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0708/2006100594-t.html>.

Afghanistan) will display oppression that will be seen as horrific through a Western lens. This is not to imply that all Muslims accept this specific fundamental view, but some certainly do.

Osama Bin Laden and Rabaie Al-Zawahiri are Sunni Wahhbists, which is a form of Salafi Islam and part of the Hanbali school of Islamic jurisprudence. Figure 2, Major Schools of Islamic Jurisprudence, is provided for illustrative purposes. Al Qaeda is an example of a group whose fundamental beliefs are radical to the point of being completely at odds with most of the world's governmental systems. Radical fundamentalism that cannot be negotiated or moderated through political discourse is the recipe for extremism.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> "Strict adherence" means that there is no compromise in *Sharia* law. Salafists believe that the Quran is not subject to reinterpretation, and the interpretation of Mohammad or the first three generations of Muslim leaders is unquestionable. The Hadiths are guidance based upon the acts or statements of the Prophet Mohammad which were orally passed down and eventually written. Robert Wuthnow, *Encyclopedia of Politics and Religion*, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2007), 436-478, <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip073/2006034642.html>.; Lawrence Davidson, *Islamic Fundamentalism : An Introduction*, Rev. and updated. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2003), 53.; Several authors contribute the ideas presented above with regards to fundamentalism and Islamic jurisprudence. Benjamin, *The Age of Sacred Terror*, 560; Salama, *Al-Jihad Al-Islami*



\*Hanafi, Hanbali, Maliki, and Shafii are all schools of Sunni Islamic law, or jurisprudence. Twelver, Sevener, Fiver, and Kharijite are schools of Shia law. Salafi and Sufi are movements within the various Sunni schools of law. This figure is not all encompassing, nor it is meant to be a definitive classification guide; it is simply provided to illustrate the major schools of Islamic jurisprudence and movements within Islam.

**Figure 2, Major Schools of Islamic Jurisprudence<sup>27</sup>**

Iraq is 60-65% Shia Muslim, 32-37% Sunni, and the remainder is Christians, Yazidis, Mandaeans, and Jews. Shia Islam split from the Sunnis in the late seventh century with the assassination of Mohammad's son-in-law Ali. Shias believe there is always room for reinterpretation of *Sharia* law, the Quran, and the Hadiths. As with Sunni Islam, there are sects

<sup>27</sup> This chart is derived from the writings of Majid Khaddari and various web pages provided by GlobalSecurity.org Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, 22-41; "Sunni Islam," GlobalSecurity.org, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/intro/islam-sunni.htm> (accessed December 10, 2008). Al Qaeda is a Salafi movement subscribing to the Hanbali school of jurisprudence within the Sunni faith.

within the Shia faith; the preponderance of Shias in Iraq and Iran belong to the Twelver (Ithna-Ashari) sect and subscribe to the Usuli school of jurisprudence. The Usuli school is even more open to interpretation than the competing Twelver school of Akhbari. Shia Muslims believe that Allah provides a guide to its people; this imam is a descendant of the Prophet and essentially has the ability to interpret God's will. Whereas Sunni Muslims are prone to living life according to God's law, Shia Muslims are similar to Catholics in that they are more defined by their "rituals, passion, and drama" and have no immediate need to convert the rest of the world. Although there are significant differences between the beliefs of Sunnis and Shias, both groups believe the Quran to be the source of law.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> GlobalSecurity.org, while not an authoritative source on the subject, provides a good starting point for research into Islamic sects and provides useful facts and figures used in this monograph. "Religious Structure," GlobalSecurity.org, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iraq/religion.htm> (accessed December 10, 2008).; Global Security, "Shia Islam," GlobalSecurity.org, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/intro/islam-shiia.htm> (accessed December 10, 2008).; Shi'a Muslims argue that Ali was the rightful heir to the Caliphate after Mohammad, but Abu Bakr was named successor instead. Two more caliphs succeeded Bakr before Ali was eventually made caliph. Ali was assassinated in the mid seventh century. More consternation took place over whom the next caliph would be, and Muawiya (who had been warring with Ali) became the caliph. Ali's son and many others did not accept this and stood against Muawiya. Muawiya sent an overwhelming force against Husayn at Karbala and killed him. This was the beginning of Shiism and also origins of the Shia view of Martyrdom. Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *The Shia Revival : How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future*, 1st ed. (New York: Norton, 2006), 35-40, <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0612/2006012361.html>.; The Library of Congress provides a great deal of information on the different schools of Islamic jurisprudence. Iraq; Vali Nasr, in *The Shia Revival*, states that Shia imams, who are descendants of Mohammad and carry the title sayyid (e.g. Ayatollah Khomeini and Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani), are senior clerics with the ability to provide interpretation of the Quran. Nasr argues that while Sunni Islam is based upon strict interpretation and law, Shia Muslims believe that the "truths" contained in the Quran can only be interpreted by the Prophet or the imams. *The Encyclopedia of Politics and Religion* supports this view, adding imams authority and interpretation are not subject to human intervention. Nasr, *The Shia Revival : How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future*, 43-61; Wuthnow, *Encyclopedia of Politics and Religion*, 437-439; Khadduri's work provides an excellent history of Sunni and Shia views with regards to the Quran. Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, 41

Iraq's Sunni Muslims are mostly Hanafi, which is considered the most liberal school of Islam. Unlike Hanbali jurisprudence (the stuff al Qaeda is made of), Hanafi is more open to consensus, which may allow for more liberal interpretations of Islam and thus allow opportunity for discourse. This means the majority of Iraq's Sunni Muslims is not hard-line fundamentalist like al Qaeda and has a greater potential to be open to modernity.<sup>29</sup>

There are still groups in Iraq prone to extremism. Groups that adhere to strict historical interpretations (e.g. hanbali and/or salafi Muslims) remove the potential for discourse. These organizations may also provide a seductive outlet for the discontent and marginalized and recruit from these groups. While all groups and factions in Iraq need to be engaged, those whose radical fundamentalist views prevent discourse may have to be engaged in less peaceful means. Even though there may be fundamentalists and radicals among them, the majority of the Iraqi population is likely to peacefully work within the governmental system.

Islam, which approximately 97% of Iraqi's subscribe to in one form or another, is the core element to engage in order to achieve United States objectives. But as stated previously, Islam is a civilization with many subcultures, the predominate one being Arab. While Islam may dominate the Arab way of life, the Arab culture has a history that needs to be understood in order

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<sup>29</sup> Hanafi jurisprudence allows 4 sources for legal interpretation: the Quran, the *sunna* (practices of the Prophet and his companions, analytical deduction (*qiyas*), and consensus or *ijmaa* (consensus of the leading clerics). Hanbali jurisprudence allows only the Quran and the *sunna* to be used which make it much less liberal. Global Security, *Religious Structure*; "Hanafi Islam," GlobalSecurity.org, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/intro/islam-hanafi.htm> (accessed December 10, 2008).; Andrew Forbes, "Osama Bin Laden and the Politics of Islam in Afghanistan," CPAMedia, [http://www.cpamedia.com/politics/binladen\\_islam\\_politics\\_in\\_afghanistan/](http://www.cpamedia.com/politics/binladen_islam_politics_in_afghanistan/) (accessed February 3, 2009).

to properly engage and influence the population. Arab culture (this includes about 76% of Iraqis) is at the core of Islam.<sup>30</sup>

## Arab Culture

After 1500 years, the Arab civilization was swallowed by the rise of Islam in the seventh century A.D. But this was not an invasion by another culture; it was a transformation. Arabs became Muslims. Today's Arabs are a product of their almost 3000 year history and many of the original Bedouin characteristics exist today; they have hung on to practices which are opposed to modernity and civil liberties. In the eyes of some westerners, Arabs are troublesomely honorable, prone to exaggeration, and simply lazy, but this is a sign of cultural differences. The Arab world is currently in a stagnate state, with no significant growth or contribution to the world in the last century.<sup>31</sup>

In a foreword for the *Arab Human Development Report 2002*, the United Nations Administrator, Mark Malloch Brown, propounds that Arab states are affected by underdevelopment in education, health, economic, and social reform more than any other group worldwide. A team of predominantly Arab authors from the United Nations Development Programme produced a series of four reports from 2002-2005 that highlight the stagnation in the growth of the Arab world. The acknowledgment of the backwardness as well as the high

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<sup>30</sup> *Iraq*

<sup>31</sup> Raphael Patai's *The Arab Mind* is used to back the argument of the lack of relevant recent history by, and stagnation of, the Arab world. Patai, *The Arab Mind*, 261-283

percentage of violence (in the form of terrorism) originating from the Arab world certainly justifies an examination of the region's formative culture.<sup>32</sup>

The known history of Arab civilization starts around 853 B.C., in the Arabian Peninsula. As part Bedouin and part agricultural society, the Arabs were dispersed and relatively weak as a culture. However, they were individually strong and held traditions of dignity, freedom, and hospitality, which have survived through fables (such as *Arabian Nights*) and poetry characterizing the pre-Islamic millennia. In the early seventh century, with the rise of Islam and Mohammad, Islam enveloped the Arab civilization, but did not erase its influence.<sup>33</sup>

Among the most influential Bedouin traits that remain in Arab culture are those of bravery, hospitality, and honor. The ideal of hospitality in Bedouin society served to strengthen alliances and increase security of the clan. It extends to complete strangers (even westerners) and even to fugitives; the fervor with which hospitality is offered may make some westerners

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<sup>32</sup> The United Nations Development Programme's *Arab Human Development Reports* highlight many problems consistent within Arab states. "The Arab Human Development Report 2002: Creating Opportunities for Future Generations," United Nations Development Programme, Regional Bureau for Arab States, <http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdr/ahdr2002e.pdf> (accessed February 5, 2009).; "The Arab Human Development Report 2003: Building a Knowledge Society," United Nations Development Programme, Regional Bureau for Arab States, <http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdr/ahdr2003e.pdf> (accessed February 5, 2009).; "The Arab Human Development Report 2004: Towards Freedom in the Arab World," United Nations Development Programme, Regional Bureau for Arab States, <http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdr/ahdr2004e.pdf> (accessed February 5, 2009).; "The Arab Human Development Report 2005: Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World," United Nations Development Programme, Regional Bureau for Arab States, <http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdr/ahdr2005e.pdf> (accessed February 5, 2009).. *More Freedom, Less Terror?* offers significant statistics on terrorist activity originating from the Arab world. Dalia Dassa Kaye, *More Freedom, Less Terror? : Liberalization and Political Violence in the Arab World* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2008), xiv-xv.

<sup>33</sup> Francesco Gabrieli, *The Arabs : A Compact History* [Arabi.] (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1963), 1-23.

uncomfortable, but for an Arab not to offer would be considered dishonorable. Bravery is not an outward expression of aggression, but is expected to defend one's family or tribe; being labeled a coward would be to lose honor. This last trait, honor, is the one that manifests itself the greatest and has transcended most into Islam. The "saving of face", the modesty a woman must maintain, and the dislike of physical work, are all related to the ideas of honor and self-respect. However, it seems that this notion, unlike in western culture, is solely an outward manifestation and that shame is not felt unless the event is witnessed or known. The ideals of self-respect (tied to honor, saving face, or *wajh*) are the pivotal trait in Arab culture and are so ingrained as to be detrimental and limiting.<sup>34</sup>

While honor takes many forms in Arab culture, none is so important as that derived from devotion to the tribe or clan. A dishonored member dishonors the group and threatens the others' self-respect. Honor of the family (or group, tribe, or clan) is dependent upon the honor of the individual, and vice-versa. Men have killed their daughters and sisters (if the woman has lost her honor) in order to save their own honor and preserve their self-respect. The concept of honor extends beyond just the immediate family or group clan or sect; this sense of duty to the group has become a core concept in Islamic extremism. A *fatwa* calling for *jihad* becomes a duty for a

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<sup>34</sup> This author has often felt uncomfortable with the excessive hospitality offered, sometimes thrust upon, by Arabs in Kuwait and Qatar. I have also had many stories related by U.S. fighter pilots who told of Arab pilots refusing to acknowledge mistakes during aerial training, the result of which is little or no learning for the Arab pilot. Raphael Patai offers several chapters on the Bedouin characteristics that have remained part of modern Arab culture. Patai, *The Arab Mind*, 78-125



Muslim, and to not to answer the call is dishonorable. A man must defend his honor, that of his family, and that of his sect; the means used may easily become violent.<sup>35</sup>

As much as honor, Arabs value Arabic. Their language is influential and is perhaps the cause of their proneness to exaggeration; something westerners might look at as lying. But lying, telling a tale, is exactly what the Arab culture is filled with. Arab children learn from a young age to speak the language with overassertion. A simple “thank you” becomes “may Allah increase your well-being”; a simple “good morning” may be “may your day be prosperous and blessed”. The eloquence in the language, the “delicious quality of Arabic style”, is sign of the emotion attached to their character. An Arab’s “truth” is not necessarily as closely related to the facts as a westerner may assume. The use of Arabic language, a product of Bedouin poetry and storytelling, is prone to such exaggeration that communication is no simple matter (even amongst Arabs).<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Patai offers that self-respect is the central aspect of the Arab personality and it is almost indistinguishable from honor. Gordon and Trainor, in *Cobra II*, sight an excellent example of honor reprisals in Fallujah when, after an attack on US forces, a local Iraqi civil engineer states the motivation as: “If you kill my brother, then I will kill yours.” Marty and Appleby offer an example of the duty felt by an Arab Muslim in answering a *fatwa* (Islamic legal ruling or opinion) for *jihad* (holy war in this case) in Egypt, 1980. While the meaning of “*jihad*” is debated as to whether it calls for violence or not, what matters here is that the Quran, in verses such as 4:74-95 for example, can easily be interpreted to make *jihad* a duty for Muslims. *ibid.*, 95-102; Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II : The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), 462, <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0625/2005051841-d.html>.; Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an : Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Washington: American International Printing, 1946), 202-211.

<sup>36</sup> Raphael Patai provides a section in *The Arab Mind* on Exaggeration, Overassertion, and Repetition in which he describes the relation of language and the “Arabic style” to the relation of stories which have an element of truth (relative to what a westerner might perceive) but possess many misleading and even false statements. He relates an exchange in 1948 between the Syrian President (who even claimed to have an atomic bomb), the Iraqi Prime Minister, and the King of Saudi Arabia who all proclaimed they were more than prepared for war with Israel and would have an easy time defeating the Israeli military. The statements were what they wanted to have happen, not what the facts were. John Agresto relates several

Truth is always a perception of the facts. In western society, we often use the terms truth and facts synonymously; this can be a danger when dealing with people in the Arab world. Even when we know the facts, we (westerners) tell the truth (our perception of what those facts mean). Prone to flowery language and over-assertion, Arabs should be expected to tell a different truth; even if their perception is similar (which itself is unlikely), the words they use could easily be misinterpreted as a different “truth”. Arabs will tend to think of things like they want them to be, not so much as they are. John Agresto, in *Mugged by Reality*, illustrates the point well when he relates a story of the Higher Education Minister in Iraq claiming to have had his house raided by US forces and his family threatened at gun point; the closer truth was that the US forces had knocked on his door in the evening to inform him that they had spoken with his (the Minister’s) security detail and that everything was okay. In the Arab culture, the truth may be distinctly different from the truth in western culture, even when derived from the same facts.<sup>37</sup>

This is not meant to accuse Arabs of being liars; that implies a judgment that shall be left to the reader. If we wish to derive our truth from those being relayed to us by Arabs, we must consider the cultural context of their truth. We must recognize that the lens through which we see the world is based upon an upbringing in western civilization and, regardless of personal feelings

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instances where, in 2003-2004 Iraq, he was told “truths” (the incident in the text above) that were far from the facts but held an underlying truth to the teller (to paraphrase: US forces showed up to my house and I was startled). Patai, *The Arab Mind*, 52-62; Agresto, *Mugged by Reality : The Liberation of Iraq and the Failure of Good Intentions*, 41-47

<sup>37</sup> Patai, *The Arab Mind*, 52-62; Agresto, *Mugged by Reality : The Liberation of Iraq and the Failure of Good Intentions*, 41-47

of superiority (morale or otherwise), we must acknowledge the difference between cultures in order to understand the situation. Good and bad, truth versus facts, are relative terms.

Today there is no Arab democracy in the world. Islam, the core of the Arab world, dominates Arab politics and prevents true discourse leading to liberal democratization. There are twenty-two members of the Arab League (including Palestine and Somalia). Out of those twenty-two, fifteen of those countries have easily accessible Constitutions available in English. Fourteen of those fifteen (with Lebanon being the exclusion) reference Islam as the state religion and all but two make Islam the basis for law. Based upon the previous section of Islamic culture, one should see how basing a government upon Islam could exclude non-Islamic groups, or even varying sects of Islam, leading to marginalization and extremism. Out of the seventy other constitutions reviewed worldwide, only two countries (Greece and Argentina) made any reference to a state religion. Perhaps the answer to Middle East stability is not short-term democracy but liberalization (liberal reforms) leading to long-term democratic reform.<sup>38</sup>

This section is not intended to allow “classification” of people or groups – that is dangerously simplistic and divisive. Understanding is essential, but the limited “cliff-note”

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<sup>38</sup> The RAND Corporation’s National Security Research Division studied six Arab nations and the effect political reforms have had with regards to preventing terrorism and political violence. The study points out that no true democracy exists in the Arab world and that liberalization can both contain and promote political violence. Democratic reform can have a stabilizing effect if policies are truly legitimate and inclusive of opposing organizations. Short-term inconsistencies, however, are likely to produce destabilizing effects. The study concludes that long-term consistent policies of political reform are required to achieve stability and that the influence of Islam in politics cannot be discounted; The U.S. should, if unable to promote secular government, promote moderate Islamic government that promotes liberal reform. International Law, "International Constitutional Law," , <http://www.verfassungsvergleich.de/> (accessed November 20, 2008).; Kaye, *More Freedom, Less Terror? : Liberalization and Political Violence in the Arab World*, 195

understanding that could be gained from the proceeding paragraphs will not provide an understanding of Arab-Islamic culture – but it may offer a bit of insight. Making classifications and trying to outwardly identify the various sects is useful insofar as it is necessary to comprehend one’s own ignorance and realize the limits of your own understanding.

## **Law in Iraq – the conflicts**

Iraq is an Islamic Republic. Chapter 2 of the Iraqi Constitution provides for civil liberties, personal freedom, and clearly provides for freedom of religion (Article 39); but this does not mean the same thing as it does in the United States.<sup>39</sup> The law making structure of Iraq is very different than our republic. The potential exists, and the propensity is there, to discriminate against non-Muslims without defying the Constitution. If Iraq is to become a true US ally, there will have to be reformation in the society leading to separation of Islam and the government.

The Iraqi Constitution is perfectly clear that the laws of Islam cannot be violated. While there are clearly schisms in Islam, the Quran is universally held to be the basis for law. Freedom in Islam is limited by adherence to Allah’s unalterable will. Unlike western laws that can be changed by the men who made them, Islamic law is ordained by Allah and is final. Iraq’s Constitution allows for liberties to be removed in the name of religion.

Iraq’s Supreme Federal Court is perhaps the most alarming part of Iraq’s governmental structure. The court is made up not only of judges but also of experts in Sharia law, and possesses the ability to overturn any law, even if it has not been disputed by another entity (as is done in the

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<sup>39</sup> *Iraqi Constitution*

United States). John Agresto argues that this court is in no way similar to the Supreme Court of the United States and is liken to the “Guardians Council” which effectively controls Iran. Iraq’s Constitution leaves the opportunity open for oppression.<sup>40</sup>

The Quran allows non-Muslims to practice their own religion in Muslim lands at the expense of paying a poll tax. Historically this has been done, but the citizens choosing to do so were never equal with Muslims. The orthodox view in Islam is that non-believers shall be converted or, eventually, destroyed. Islam is at constant war with the rest of the world per Allah’s command; the *dar al-harb* (house of war, or non-Muslim lands), populated by the non-believers, is only a temporary structure, existent until that time in which the *dar al-Islam* finally exerts the law of Islam upon it. Relations with the *dar al-harb* are only transitory times to be suffered in order to achieve Allah’s will. Without reformation, Iraq has the potential to become a problem, not an ally.<sup>41</sup>

Islamic law is incompatible with western law. Majid Khadduri, in his 1955 book *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, offers an Iraqi’s view of Islamic law. Khadduri asserts that Islam is a universal and borderless religion; its laws extend to the entire world and every able-bodied

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<sup>40</sup> A comparison between the US Constitution and the Iraqi Constitution shows glaring differences between the powers of the respective judiciaries. The makeup of Iraq’s Supreme Council, most importantly, demonstrates the domination of Islam in Iraqi law. Articles 90-92 in the Iraqi constitution clearly surpass the power of the US judiciary as established in Article III of the US constitution. *ibid.*; *The United States Constitution* (U.S. Constitution Online, 1787), <http://www.usconstitution.net/const.html> (accessed November 20, 2008). John Agresto argues that since the Supreme Federal Court has the power to overrule any law, and that the court represents the Shia majority, it will be the conduit for Islamic radicals (radical is used here from the purview of a western mindset) to maintain power. Agresto, *Mugged by Reality : The Liberation of Iraq and the Failure of Good Intentions*, 117-119

<sup>41</sup> Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, 321

Muslim must help to spread that law. Specific laws are present within Islam with regards to relations with non-Muslim states. Non-Islamic states are only recognized insofar as Islam recognizes the need for authority in the *dar al-harb* until such time as that area can be brought under Muslim control. Modern international law is conceived of by the *dar al-harb* and is therefore only recognized out of convenience. Without reformation in Islam, fundamental Islam will prevent Iraq (and any other Islamic republic) from being a true ally.<sup>42</sup>

The seventeenth century Peace of Westphalia brought about the true separation of Christian religion and politics in Europe. The two treaties negotiated in Westphalia recognized the right of sovereigns to choose their own religion and sought to prevent persecution, or forced conversion, of religious minorities. These treaties did not separate church from state inasmuch as they made religion a less dominant force in international relations. The Peace of Westphalia marked the end to wars designed to spread Christendom. Unfortunately, no such reformation has taken place in Islam.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Khadduri's book discusses the evolution of Islamic law. Written in 1955, it gives a seemingly unbiased, matter of fact, view of Islam at a time when Islam was not a common discussion topic. *ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> The Peace of Westphalia was signed in 1648 at the end of the Thirty Years' War. The resulting "reformation" was certainly not immediate; the reigning pope renounced the Treaties signed at Westphalia. However, the sovereignty gained by the treaties had lasting effect. The reformation effectively ended the pope's reign as leader of the "Christian world", ending his ability to launch crusades. Wuthnow, *Encyclopedia of Politics and Religion*, 231-233, 946-948. Islamic foreign affairs have not had the benefit of a reform movement separating religion from international politics. Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, 295. Even though Cardinal Alberoni, a very influential member of the Catholic Church in the early eighteenth century, concocted a very detailed plan for the attack and overthrow of the Turkish Empire, there was no longer enough support to initiate another crusade. Giulio Alberoni, "Reducing the Turkish Empire to the Obedience of Christian Princes: And for the Partition of the Conquest Together with a Scheme of Perpetual Dyet for Establishing the Publick Tranquility," *The American Journal of International Law* 7 (1913), 83, <http://books.google.com/booksid=4iU2yC65BGIC&pg=PA83&dq=cardinal+alberoni+%22scheme+for+re>

Iraq is soon to become the second most powerful Islamic Republic (second to Iran). It seems implausible that an Islamic republic can achieve the level of freedom and human rights the western world expects. A newly liberated population (perhaps unready for that liberation), with no recent history of liberal thought, is bound to struggle with its new freedom in the coming years. Reformation through liberalized education is a necessity to ensure Iraq is an ally, and not a problem, in the future.

## Middle East Education

“Acquisition of knowledge has intrinsic value by itself, but more importantly, it is an important dimension of human development because as it is a critical means of building human capability.”<sup>44</sup>

– Arab Human Development Report

There is no Middle Eastern education model to use as a guide. The United Nations *Arab Human Development Reports* point out that there is significant stagnation in the Arab world with regards to education.<sup>45</sup> Most of the Middle Eastern countries have high illiteracy rates and there is no good example of an education system espousing liberal democratic ideals. The US has a history of engagement with Middle Eastern education; it is just not a positive one. Although there are a few Islamic countries with democratic norms: Indonesia, Malaysia, and Turkey (non-of

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ducing+the+turkish+empire+to+the+obedience+of+christian+princes%22&client=safari#PPA107,M1 (accessed February 12, 2009).

<sup>44</sup> *The Arab Human Development Report 2002: Creating Opportunities for Future Generations*, 19

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*; *The Arab Human Development Report 2003: Building a Knowledge Society*, 217; *The Arab Human Development Report 2004: Towards Freedom in the Arab World*, 265; *The Arab Human Development Report 2005: Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World*, 335

which are Arab). Turkey is perhaps the best example of a democratic Muslim nation. Despite the wealth the natural resources bring to the region, the Middle East remains less developed than the western world.<sup>46</sup>

According to the CIA Factbook, only three of the sixteen Middle Eastern regions have literacy rates greater than 90% (Israel is not considered). Those regions, Gaza, West Bank, and Kuwait have literacy rates of about 93% (those countries also have relatively small populations). The rest of the Middle East regions have rates ranging from 50% (Yemen) to 89% (Jordan). In comparison, the United States, and most western nations, have literacy rates at or above 99%. Even Mexico at 91%, Venezuela at 93%, and China at 90.9% (although 1.3 million illiterate Chinese is not insignificant), all with relatively large populations, have rather high literacy rates. Although literacy rate is not the only determining factor in education (it certainly does not answer for quality), it is a good indicator for a place to start.<sup>47</sup>

As stated previously, education reform is essential to a liberal democracy. Carlos Alberto Torres, in *Cultures of Arab Schooling*, states that without outside interaction the Arab world's education systems will preclude the region from realizing their democratic potential. He further argues that, while not the answer in itself, engagement with the region to reform the education systems is necessary. True freedom is a long road and cannot be forced, it must be something the

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<sup>46</sup> Marwan Muasher, a Jordanian diplomat, offers his views on the success and failures of the Arab world, and the influence of Islam in *The Arab Center*. Marwan Muasher, *The Arab Center: The Promise of Moderation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 253-256.

<sup>47</sup> Literacy rates may be defined differently for each individual country. Loosely defined, it is the percentage of teenagers that are able to read and write (although the level of the reading and writing is not necessarily standard). CIA World Factbook. "The World Factbook." CIA - The World Factbook. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/xx.html> (accessed December 12, 2008).



people understand and desire; the populace of the Middle East must experience liberalization, before they will achieve liberation.<sup>48</sup>

The US cannot control the education system of another country; nor should it attempt to do so. According to Gregory Starrett and Eleanor Adella Doumato, in *Teaching Islam*, the US has in recent history, funded projects in the schools of Afghanistan and Pakistan to militarize their youth against the Soviet invasion. That project seems to have worked and we may now be experiencing the backlash of that education through extremist actions by fundamental Islamic groups. Engagement in terms of Islam may not be the answer. Influencing the system to stress secular liberalizing ideals may prove more beneficial; this, of course, is not a short-term goal.<sup>49</sup>

While not a perfect model for study, perhaps Turkey is the only good example of a large Muslim country that was able to secularize and support that goal with the education system. With a literate population of just over 87% Turkey may not be fully modernized, but the country has survived as a republic since the 1920s. Mustafa Ataturk, the leader of the liberating reform movement in Turkey, recognized the importance of education reform. After the war of liberation he espoused as much to the teachers in his country, stating, “the victories won by our armies have prepared the ground where real victories will be won in the field of education.” He asserted that “democracy requires liberal minded, free generations” and Ataturk reformed the education system

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<sup>48</sup> *Culture of Arab Schooling* is a series of essays contributed by multiple authors working in the Middle East, specifically Egypt. Linda Herrera and Carlos Alberto Torres, *Cultures of Arab Schooling : Critical Ethnographies from Egypt* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 209, <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip065/2005036228.html>.

<sup>49</sup> Eleanor Abdella Doumato and Gregory Starrett, *Teaching Islam: Textbooks and Religion in the Middle East* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007), 6, <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0612/2006012601.html>.

to meet the ideals of his new nation. Turkey's reforms in education are one of the underlying reasons for their continued success. Turkey is by no means perfect, but it does have democratic institutions and is, in general, allied to US interests.<sup>50</sup>

Although no perfect model exists for liberal education reform in an Arab Islamic country, at least Turkey offers a surrogate. The education system throughout the Middle East is lacking in many ways and external engagement is necessary to reform this part of the world. The US does not have an unblemished track record in the region and consideration must be given to the long-term effects (desired and undesired) of meddling with education as a potential influential force on a society. Contextually, Iraq is different than any other country in the region, but that does not justify foregoing the lessons of history.

## **Historic Education and Reconciliation**

Two historic accounts of nation building are considered in this study: Japan after World War II and Germany after reunification in 1990. Japan was a nation defeated in war, whereas the collapse of the Soviet Union led to the common desire to reunify Germany. Although the context of Germany and Japan are decisively different than Iraq (and each other for that matter), what can be taken away is the use of education to influence the future welfare of the countries.

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<sup>50</sup> Dr Afetinan, a Turkish historian and sociologist, knew Mustafa Ataturk and describes, at length, his sentiments about the importance of education reform in Turkey's new republic. A. Afetinan, *A History of the Turkish Revolution and Turkish Republic* (Ankara, Turkey: S.N., 1981), 178-202.. Some may argue that Turkey is not necessarily an ally to the US and cite the 2003 decision to refuse US basing rights in Turkey as an example. This argument can be countered with the fact that it was a democratic institution that openly made the decision; a decision that is not that different than France denying over flight rights for US strike aircraft in the Libyan raid in 1986. More on Turkey's recent democratic evolutions can be found in *Islam and Democracy in the Middle East* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 162-188, <http://cgsc.leavenworth.army.mil/carl/images/ebrary.jpg>.

## Japan

Education is the process by which a society seeks to inculcate its most cherished ideals in the minds of succeeding generations. Little wonder it is that the Allied Occupiers of Japan – social tinkers unmatched in modern history – chose education as a target for major reform.

—Thomas W. Burkman, *The Occupation of Japan, Educational and Social Reform*

Japan is not a blueprint for action in Iraq, but it does offer valuable insights. The goals for Japan are similar to those in Iraq. The Japanese school system at the time was similar to Iraq's (under the Baath party) in that it was rigidly controlled. In Japan, as in Iraq in 2003, the schools required purging to rid the system of toxic thought, but it was understood by the occupying authority that the culture could not be crushed. Although there are similarities between post WWII Japan and post-invasion Iraq that can be learned from, the underlying context of the society is different.

General Whitney's first-hand account of General MacArthur's thoughts, during his flight into Japan in August 1945 to take over as Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers in Japan, provides a glimpse of the developing strategy toward reconciliation; MacArthur's thoughts toward liberalizing the Japanese education system became one of the "five fundamental reforms" of the Occupation. Although, similar to President Bush's goals for Iraq, the goals for the Occupation of Japan were broad (e.g. "encourage the establishment in Japan of a peaceful, democratic government"), MacArthur took this guidance and was able to define his five fundamentals. MacArthur apparently understood the necessity to influence the culture of Japan

and that the education system was a conduit to accomplish that. The reformation was designed to decentralize, purge the schools of imperialism and militarism, and design a system to foster democracy without destroying the Japanese culture.<sup>51</sup>

Since 1871, the Japanese education system was tightly centralized; this approach of schooling was built out of a desire to rapidly develop the country. Unfortunately, this centralization became a tool for imperialism. As Sackton put it, the education system was used “to develop an obedient citizenry responsive to the ultra nationalistic aims of the controlling power in Tokyo”. The goal of the system post WWII was to change from creating citizens loyal to the emperor to empowered individuals. Decentralization was the key to liberating the schools and allowing them to teach to students instead of indoctrinate; the goal was to shift the control of schools down to a local level.<sup>52</sup>

US recommendations for the Japanese school system centered on educating the teachers, including teaching to individual student needs and capabilities (versus rigid lecturing) as well as promoting professionalism amongst teachers. To do this required purging of many loyalist teachers and the elimination of propaganda textbooks. Over 120,000 teachers were fired or quit as

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<sup>51</sup> General Courtney Whitney was a staff officer for General MacArthur during the occupation of Japan and provides his account of the rebuilding process. Courtney Whitney, *MacArthur: His Rendezvous with History* (New York: Knopf, 1956), 213.. Moore (a historian) and Robinson (former professor of Government and American Studies at Smith College) provide a more contemporary account of the development of Japan into a modern democracy. Ray A. Moore and Donald L. Robinson, *Partners for Democracy : Crafting the New Japanese State Under MacArthur* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 9-10..

<sup>52</sup> Thomas W. Burkman, *The Occupation of Japan: Educational and Social Reform : The Proceedings of a Symposium Sponsored by the MacArthur Memorial, Old Dominion University, the MacArthur Memorial Foundation, October 16-18, 1980* (Norfolk, Va.: Gatling Printing and Pub., 1982), 4-7, 268.

the result of education reform. Until texts could be rewritten and purged of the party line materials, many subjects were discontinued. Also eliminated were military training and martial sports. And while these changes were significant, Occupational was designed to influence the culture, not break it.<sup>53</sup>

Not everything was dictated to the Japanese. While it is true that changes were grand, some matters were left for debate. While the American education experts desired to institute the use of roman letters, this was considered perhaps going beyond the requirements for establishing democracy and was left up to the Japanese to decide (and summarily dismissed). The requirement for compulsory education was also just an expansion of what the existing system already comprised. The new system simply took compulsory schooling from six years to twelve. And while the schools and government were secularized, the authority did not prevent religious teachings outside schools, they just removed it from the compulsory system.<sup>54</sup>

The Occupational authority did not crush the Japanese culture, but carefully nudged it in the right direction. The changes made to the system were, in large, dictated, but were not so demanding as to cause social upheaval. General MacArthur did not hesitate to change the system, but he clearly understood and considered the needs of the society. Over half a century has passed

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<sup>53</sup> Finn's work discusses the rebuilding process in post WWII Japan. Richard B. Finn, *Winners in Peace : MacArthur, Yoshida, and Postwar Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958), 177.; Burkman provides the proceedings of a 1980 symposium on the occupation of Japan. Burkman, *The Occupation of Japan : Educational and Social Reform : The Proceedings of a Symposium Sponsored by the MacArthur Memorial, Old Dominion University, the MacArthur Memorial Foundation, October 16-18, 1980*, 5-6

<sup>54</sup> Both Finn and Moore contribute these facts about the reform of Japan's education system. Finn, *Winners in Peace : MacArthur, Yoshida, and Postwar Japan*, 59-62,133; Moore and Robinson, *Partners for Democracy : Crafting the New Japanese State Under MacArthur*, 45,253

and Japan is still a stable and flourishing country. While the impact of education reform cannot necessarily be directly measured, what is clear is that the today's children of Japan have little desire to become a "menace to the peace and security of the world" (another of the original goals for Japan).<sup>55</sup>

Although Japan is often noted as a success in US nation building, the difference between the Japanese situation and Iraq is distinct. In Japan, the allied powers just won unconditional surrender and were truly an occupying power. Most importantly, Japan was arguably a semi-democracy; they at least had democratic institutions at most levels.<sup>56</sup> In Iraq, the US is a liberating, not occupying force (an arguable point for some). Iraq suffered under brutal socialism and has no recent history of democratic institutions to build a modern democracy upon. While the case of Japan offers historical insight and relevance, the post-unification education reform effort of Germany in 1990 may more closely match the situation in Iraq.

## Germany

The essence of democratic education is respect for the diversity, spontaneity and creativity of people.

—George Stoddard, *Winners in Peace*

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<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, 9

<sup>56</sup> Greg Cashman and Leonard C. Robinson, *An Introduction to the Causes of War; Patterns of Interstate Conflict from World War I to Iraq* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 89-91.

Unlike Japan, but similar to Iraq, East Germany (the German Democratic Republic or GDR) was liberated in 1990. This liberation was slowly building and was led from inside the country. Citizens were increasingly taking to the streets and demanding more freedoms in the years prior to reunification. East Germany, unlike Iraq, had been slowly breaking from the Soviet grasp and was ready for liberation and reform away from socialism.<sup>57</sup>

The German Democratic Republic education system fostered a message of hate toward capitalism and a message of faithfulness toward the socialist leadership from early childhood on. The indoctrination that took place in East Germany prior to reunification in 1990 is diametrically opposed to democratic ideology. Almost immediately after reunification with West Germany, the GDR's education system experienced reformation. Unlike Japan, where the occupying power dictated guidelines, the German reformation came from within with assistance from the west. As happened in Japan, teacher reeducation in the GDR was a priority in order to reform the school system.<sup>58</sup>

Similar to Japan and Iraq, the pre-unification education system was centralized under the control of the Socialist Unity Party (the only political party with authority). The Socialist Unity Party controlled not only the elementary and middle schools, but also the vocational and professional educational programs. The system did not promote individualism, self-enhancement

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<sup>57</sup> Christopher Anderson, Karl Kaltenthaler, and Wolfgang Luthardt, *The Domestic Politics of German Unification* (Boulder, Colo.: L. Rienner, 1993).

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, 206-214

or creativity; it fostered a compliant society to support the GDR. Reform in the Soviet Union and other Eastern Block countries led to the eventual reform in Germany also.<sup>59</sup>

The school system, as a tool of the state, thoroughly ingrained the Soviet “truth” into children. The *History of the Socialist Unity Party*, a required teaching, was filled with blatant propaganda and party line: the Nazis were taught as ancestors only to the West Germans; fascism was said to have been imposed on Germans by capitalists; and the holocaust was purported to be against, not the Jews, but communists. The lies perpetuated by the Party formed a nonfactual truth for generations of East Germans. Some adults were so well entrenched in communist ways, that the idea of reunification was likened to “another rape”.<sup>60</sup>

Even though many were reluctant to change, the people of the German Democratic Republic liberated themselves as the Soviet Union weakened its grasp. The newfound freedoms were a shock to many. After years of socialist rule, being told what to do, what to study, where to work, and what to think, some people had a difficult time adjusting. Some were unable to succeed in the capitalist world because they simply did not comprehend it. Others openly rebelled against

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<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*, 205-207

<sup>60</sup> Marc Fisher became bureau chief in Germany for the Washington Post in 1989. His book *After the Wall* highlights the lives of GDR citizens from the years preceding the fall of the Berlin wall until a few years after. He follows a particular family, the Hotzes, who were committed communists; they eventually left the East only to fail in a capitalist system they could not understand and returned to a small town where socialism was still embraced. Marc Fisher, *After the Wall: Germany, the Germans, and the Burdens of History* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 107-140..



the change and what it brought. Even though the reforms were led from within, they were not without problems.<sup>61</sup>

After the opening of the border between East and West Germany, and the subsequent collapse of the GDR, reform was almost immediate—not dictated from outside, but from inside with cooperation from West Germany. The West German education system, a system designed to promote diversity and creativity, became a model for the GDR. East Germany transformed from their version of equality (i.e. uniformity) to the equality that the west promoted; as Lutz Reuter put it, the West German version of equal education meant “equality of opportunities for students regardless of intellectual talent” (a track-based approach instead of lecture to the masses). Education was transformed into a system encouraging individualism and capitalism to support the new democratic nature of the unified Germany; the GDR citizens recognized the pivotal nature of the schools.<sup>62</sup>

All school systems “indoctrinate” their students into the system they promote, which typically mimics the government in power. In the GDR case, unification meant liberation and a new system of government that the people were ready to embrace and a new education system to

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<sup>61</sup> In a much smaller way than Iraq, Germany had its own issues with liberation. Fisher writes about the new freedoms in the former GDR leading to neo-Nazi movements. After years of indoctrination, propaganda and lies it is almost understandable that people would not know who or what to believe. Some, such as the neo-Nazi groups, needed an outlet for their frustration, hate, and impotence in the reform movement. *ibid.*, 238-254. Eleanor Lansing was a US diplomat that, among many other duties, was involved with the reconstitution of West Germany after WWII; in her book written well before the collapse (*Berlin: the Wall is Not Forever*) she cites the strangling of intellectual capacity that the Socialist Party involuntarily imposed upon the GDR. Eleanor Lansing Dulles, *Berlin: The Wall is Not Forever* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967), 165-178.

<sup>62</sup> Anderson, Kaltenthaler, and Luthardt, *The Domestic Politics of German Unification*, 1-14, 205-222

support it. In Japan, defeat and unconditional surrender meant succumbing to the will of the occupational authority; the changes to their system were imposed upon the Japanese people and the reconciliation process required a reformed educational system to support integration of democratic principals into their culture. Iraq is a combination; while not “occupied” per se, the liberating force that “resides in” its borders has the intent of making Iraq a democratic ally. Japan, the German Democratic Republic, and Iraq all had education systems indoctrinating children in ideals opposed to US interests; reconstruction means re-indoctrinating the populace with liberal democratic ideals.

## **Reconstruction of Iraq**

US led efforts in restructuring the Iraqi education system are concentrating on quantity rather than quality. While the infrastructure, in terms of numbers of schools, teachers, desks and books, is essential to education, what is missing is the transformation of the system to one espousing liberal democratic ideals. The Iraqi Ministry of Education is taking positive measures toward reformation, but these measures maybe too late in the education process. The initial efforts by the US (both military and civilian) may have lasting, and potentially detrimental, effects. Unlike the reformations in Turkey, Japan, and Germany, emphasis on instilling liberal democratic ideals at an early age seem to be lacking.

The 2003 liberation of Iraq initially brought chaos rather than liberty. That made Iraqis concerned over the democratic freedom we espoused. The initial unchecked looting, the sweeping de-baathification, and the slow restoration of infrastructure (namely electricity) made some people doubt whether the US could provide security. There were also those concerned about what the concept of “majority rule” would mean in Iraq; a democratically elected tyranny is not much better than a brutal dictatorship. For instance, electing a Sunni religious fanatic could lead to irreversible policies of oppression to Sunni’s and none Muslims. The initial instability may have

lasting ramifications and without true reform within Iraqi society, the country may not become the ally the US desires.<sup>63</sup>

So far, reform in Iraq appears to have taken the form of “out with the old”; the “in with new” is new infrastructure, but not well thought out curriculum. The US Agency for International Development releases regular reports on the status of Iraq and highlights the progress made in rehabilitating the schools and the progress of the provincial reconstruction teams. The United Nations has a stream of reports noting progress in education. These reports unfortunately only highlight the tangibles: numbers of buildings, teachers, desks, and books. These are measures of their (United Nations and US Agency for International Development) performance, not measures of their effectiveness. There are reports about progress in vocational education, and while also very important, this does not address the long-term concerns of liberalized thought. Even the Iraqi Ministry of Education provides little insight into their long-term strategy. Although there are those involved in the restructuring of Iraq espousing the need for liberal democratic reform, there is neither policy on how to achieve it nor any measure of achievement.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Agresto, *Mugged by Reality : The Liberation of Iraq and the Failure of Good Intentions*, 97-119

<sup>64</sup> US Agency for International Development and United Nations documents and websites consistently provide progress reports in terms of tangibles, but do not discuss how education should be used to shape the minds of the Iraqi people. *US AID Assistance for Iraq* (US Agency for International Development, 2009), <http://www.usaid.gov/iraq/accomplishments/education.html> (accessed March 6, 2009).; United Nations Security Council, "SC/9602," United Nations, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2009/sc9602.doc.htm> (accessed March 6, 2009).; *A Year in Iraq* (US Agency for International Development, 2004), <http://www.usaid.gov/> (accessed March 6, 2009).; *Our Commitment to Iraq* (US Agency for International Development, 2005), <http://www.usaid.gov/> (accessed March 6, 2009).; *Iraqi Constitution; Iraq Provincial Reconstruction Teams* (US Agency for International Development, 2007), <http://www.usaid.gov/> (accessed March 6, 2009). The strategy published by the Iraqi Ministry of Education does mention the need for human rights education, but only at the high school level;

John Agresto, a senior advisor to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, is one of those who advocate the need for education reform, and not just rehabilitation of the infrastructure. He highlights many of the problems within Iraqi society that education can potentially transform. One of the biggest hurdles for the US to overcome is to realize our ignorance. We (westerners in general) think of democracy as freedom and think of education in terms of numbers of schools.<sup>65</sup> Advocates of long-term goals, with objectives not measurable in the short-term, find themselves out of touch with leadership interested in promotion and election.

Reformation in Iraqi society is what is needed; the way to that reform is through education and it will take time. Building schools and hiring teachers is essential, but not adequate. Rebuilding a malfunctioning system will likely create another malfunctioning system. Iraq's education system is not being blindly rebuilt into the same repressive, rote memorization, system it was; however the rebuilding strategy (if that can apply) does seem to suffer from myopia. Rehabilitation, while necessary, will only get you so far.

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they provide little insight into how they will accomplish this task. *Strategies of the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research*

<sup>65</sup> Agresto, *Mugged by Reality : The Liberation of Iraq and the Failure of Good Intentions*, 202

## Summary

History has many examples of good and bad nation building, but Iraq is contextually unique. The combination of thirty-five years of oppressive socialist rule, a primarily Arab-Islamic society, and the method in which Iraq was liberated, all make the country a distinctive entity for which there is no template for success. If Iraq is to become a self-governed democratic ally, the US must develop a strategy for the transition and advisory teams to reform the Iraqi people. If the United States' goal for Iraq is to have their government closely resemble our own, we must be able to define the differences that exist. Iraq will not transform overnight and is unlikely to become a westernized country; in the near-term, it must be nurtured into a state of being that the US can tolerate.

Iraq is not in a tolerable position right now. Iraq requires long-term engagement in order to influence its future. Right now, security forces are still necessary; but even when the day comes that Iraq can provide its own security, we must continue to engage with advisers and transition teams. If left to its own ends, it will not likely transform into the liberal democracy we desire.

Over three decades of oppression have resulted in a population unable to build or support a liberal republic. That cannot be changed quickly. Writing a Constitution and putting leaders in place is barely scratching the surface of what is needed. The United States was not built from the top down like the way Iraq is being designed. The fundamental way Iraqis think must be engaged; liberal democracy requires liberal minded people at all levels.

The Arab-Islamic majority of Iraq does not think or act the way Westerners do. Islam is the fundamental differentiating force and Arab culture is at its core. Understanding Islam, its ideals, its relevance as not only a religion but also a way of life, is essential to understanding how to influence the Iraqi people. Knowledge of Islamic law and its history will help explain how Iraq

is likely to develop and where and how intervention can successfully take place. Teams responsible for the transition must understand not only Iraqi culture, but western culture as well.

Understanding Islam and Arab culture is insufficient; we must understand the difference between what they are, and what we want them to be. The US wants Iraq to be a democracy, but that word must be thoroughly understood. A Western version of a democracy is considerably different than an Islamic democracy. Freedom is different when viewed through a Western lens than through an Islamic lens. We must not only understand ourselves, but also those who we intend to influence.<sup>66</sup> We must understand the foundations of our own nation before we can try and fit our template on others.

While the lessons of historical nation building are important, they alone will prove insufficient to build a strategy to transform Iraq into the liberal democratic Middle Eastern ally the US desires. We must fully appreciate the differences (and the reasons for those differences) between our culture and theirs; we must understand why our republic is what it is in order to help them build theirs. We must use education, over generations, as a tool to build a moderate and liberal Iraq if we hope to achieve a better peace.

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<sup>66</sup> While Iraq is not our enemy or adversary, Sun Tzu's words of the one who knows himself and his enemy will not be endangered can be extrapolated to the art of nation building. Sunzi, Ralph D. Sawyer, and Mei-chün Sawyer, *The Art of War: [Sun-Tzu Ping Fa]*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 179.

## Recommendations

Iraq is in a turbulent time that is unlikely to end soon. Similar to Germany during reunification, many people are struggling to deal with the changes brought by liberation; unlike Germany, most Iraqi's were less prepared for the dramatic change. Time is what is needed; the effects of three brutal decades will not be undone in a few years. Right now, the US must stay engaged with Iraq and help focus and shape the coming generations of Iraqis. We must try to guide them into creating a liberalized education system that will foster the critical thinking skills necessary to build a stable country. More importantly, we must press for secularization and attempt to limit Iraq turning into a country based upon Sharia law. Failure to accomplish these things is likely to result in Iraq becoming a problem once again.

Iraq is on the course of becoming an Islamic Republic whose fate is determined by the writings of Mohammad and the clerics in charge of interpreting said writings. This is contrary to our national interests and will limit Iraq's ability to be an ally or partner. While changing the propensity of Iraq requires a whole of government approach, the US military can help shape and influence. But our shaping and influencing must be in the message we send, through our words and our actions. Many Iraqi's only direct contact with the outside world is through coalition soldiers. At all levels, our soldiers need to understand the motive for our actions and the message we are trying to send. They must understand not only Iraqi culture, but western culture as well; our soldiers should be able to converse in the theories our liberal democratic republic is founded on better than our opposition can converse in Islamic fundamentalism. We must encourage engagement and open conversation by our transition teams; we must take the chance and walk the fine line between offending our hosts and inciting discourse. Our strategic narrative must continue to expound individual freedoms and the need for a country to be ruled by the men and women inside it.

Secondly, our transition teams should continue to engage with the Iraqi Ministry of Education. Our strategic narrative should penetrate to the lowest levels. Iraq is a sovereign country capable of making its own choices, but that does not mean those choices need be uninformed by western thought. Our teams need to engage with schools at every level to help shape the curriculum necessary to build a liberal democracy. The effects of such engagement are measurable in the short term by auditing curriculum; the full effects, however, will only be seen in the long term – twenty or thirty years from now. Directly influencing the education system now is the ounce of prevention we need in order to prevent from resorting to bombs and bullets in a few decades.

It appears we may have not had an entirely thought through plan for transforming Iraq; this is a mistake we should hazard to avoid in the future. Prior to breaking down the doors of the next country, we should strive to have an idea of the system of transformation required. We must lucidly plan and develop realistic goals based upon cultural propensities. We must understand not only our opposition's culture, but ours as well in order to really know the differences. MacArthur understood what he was getting into in Japan; he knew where the points of influence were to be found. In the future, we must acknowledge the long road ahead for nation building and understand that schools are the indoctrination centers for liberal thought.

### **Areas for Further Study**

The research in this monograph is limited in certain regards. More study should be accomplished on other Islamic states and their propensity toward liberal democratization. Direct engagement and interviews with members of the Iraqi Ministry of Education will also further this topic. Hopefully, this monograph provides a starting point for further research to develop the strategic narrative necessary to combat to radical fundamentalism threatening Iraq.

Recommendations for additional country studies include Malaysia, Jordan, and Kuwait. Kuwait and Jordan, being Middle-Eastern Arab Islamic nations with reasonably high literacy



rates may provide some insight; they were not studied for this monograph because of the small size of their populations. Malaysia, while not an Arab country, may provide insight into a large, and mostly moderate, Islamic nation. To this author's knowledge, there exists no Islamic country that professes liberal freedoms consistent with western ideology. Research into additional Muslim countries may provide insight into points of influence within the culture.

Engagement directly with the Iraqi Ministry of Education should provide primary source information on school curriculum and strategy in Iraq. While conversations were held with Iraqi officials, and Ministry reports were studied, direct engagement may provide further information. The Ministry's new web site (<http://www.iraqiculture-usa.org/>) is currently a work in progress, but may in the future be a useful source. The Ministry is an important leverage point, and direct engagement may help further the narrative that the US advocates personal freedoms and an Iraq that will become an ally.

This monograph espouses a pejorative view of the new Iraqi Constitution and the propensity of its governmental system. Additional views, specifically those of Sunni, Kurdish, and non-Muslims in Iraq may serve to balance that view.

If the US is to combat radical fundamentalism which may jeopardize Iraq's chance for success, we must develop a strategic narrative that resonates within the culture. Research into the culturally influenced logic of Islamic thought which led to the writing of the Iraqi constitution may highlight gaps that can be exploited. We must figure out how our ideals of liberal democratic reform fit within the logic of Islamic thought. Our narrative must espouse our design without overtly threatening their culture.

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